(4) Registration.

39. The necessity for reducing the rates of fees for the registration of documents.

Mr. C. Padmanabha Pillai (Member, Quilon taluk) said that registration fees had been recently enhanced. The existing rates were unduly high and sat heavily on the people. He then compared in detail the schedule of fees with the rates in British India and showed that the fees prescribed in Travancore were higher. He argued that the necessity had not been proved to raise the fees higher than in British India. The Member requested that the fees should be reduced.

Mr. Philipose Alexander (Member, Kunnathur taluk) said that, in regard to the encumbrance (*Villanga*) certificates, it was hard that the applicants should be asked to search and examine the registration records. An official in each office should be empowered to make the search. The search fees were one rupee for the first year and 4 as. for every additional year up to a maximum of Rs. 5. The rates that obtained prior to Regulation II of 1087 were moderate, *viz.*, half a rupee for the first year and a maximum of Rs. $2\frac{1}{2}$. The old rates should be revived. If that was not possible, those rates should alone be charged at least in the cases of applicants who furnished specific particulars of the number and date of the documents to be searched.

(2) In regard to copies of documents obtained from registration offices, the first page was written on an eight anna stamp paper, and for every subsequent page, a fee of 2 as. was charged, which was more than the fee levied in the Civil Courts, *viz.*, $2\frac{1}{2}$ chs. per page. The fee should be reduced to the old rate of one anna a page or at least to $2\frac{1}{2}$ chs. per page.

(3) Owing to the restriction that documents presented for registration should be returned the same day, many documents were refused, and the parties had to go to the office three and four days to present a document. To obviate the inconvenience, the Member suggested that a rule should be passed permitting the return of documents within fifteen days after presentation or that the time for presentation should be extended up to 4 P. M. each day.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

III.—PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION.

Agriculture.

40. The urgent necessity for the constitution of Co-operative Credit Societies in Travancore.

Mr. Easwaran Narayanan Oonnithan (Member, Karthigappalli taluk) said that the Co-operative Societies Bill, which was about to become law, was an honest attempt to promote thrift and self-respect among the industrial population of the State. After examining at some length the present condition of the agriculturists in the State, he observed that the tendency of the generality of people was to seek Government appointments and that the cultivation of land was abandoned to indigent and illiterate peasants, who were the despair of the Agricultural Department. Even they, being extremely poor, were at the mercy of the usurious money-lenders. There was therefore an urgent need for the constitution of Co-operative Credit Societies in important agricultural centres in the State. Such societies, by making loans to its members at reasonable rates of interest, would tend to eliminate the usurer from the agricultural life of the country. They would extinguish the necessity of resorting to the money-lender. They would also aid the improvement of agriculture in a great measure. So far as the present Regulation aimed at the attainment of those objects, it would be warmly welcomed by all persons interested in the agricultural prosperity of the State.

But it should not be forgotten that the people were not always ready to avail themselves of the privileges conferred on them by an enactment like the Co-operative

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

Societies Regulation. Some capable officer of the Government, intimately acquainted with the provisions of the Regulation and the working of similar societies outside Travancore, should co-operate with the influential men on the spot, in the work of convincing the great mass of ignorant agriculturists that the provisions embodied in the Regulation were intended for their welfare and that the success of the experiment depended entirely on their willingness and capacity to cultivate, in a far larger measure, the habits of honesty and mutual trust. If that preliminary work of instruction was neglected, the Regulation would not at present be anything more than an unprofitable addition to the statute book. In other words, having recognised the need for co-operative credit, the Government should take early steps for the actual introduction of co-operative principles in the agricultural life of the country. And, for that purpose, the Member suggested that the Government should appoint a full-time officer, who, having seen a good many co-operative societies at work abroad and having made a special study of them, not only by reading books but by spending a few months among those societies and by seeing things actually done, had thoroughly grasped their guiding principles; and that officer should move about the country, persuading the mass of agriculturists and organising societies wherever possible.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

41. Some suggestions for the improvement of agriculture.

Mr. Vareed Ipe (Member, Ettumanur taluk) dwelt at length on the circumstances which militated against the expansion of agriculture in the State and submitted the following suggestions for remedying those disabilities.

(1) Agricultural Boards, consisting of official and non-official members chosen from the cultivators, should be constituted in each taluk, or their functions should be vested in the proposed Village Panchayats. It should be their duty to work the Irrigation, Land Conservancy, Cattle Trespass and Agricultural Loans Regulations in such a way as to help agriculture, and also to protect the existing water-sources useful for agriculture.

(2) Sufficient lands should be set apart in each taluk to serve the special requirements of agriculture.

(3) A manure depot should be opened in all taluk centres.

(4) A law should be enacted prohibiting cruelty to the cattle useful for agriculture.

(5) Water-pumps should be purchased and issued by the Boards for the use of the cultivators.

(6) There were several irrigation tanks and other water-sources in different parts of the State, not shown on the survey plan. They should all be found out during the Land Records Maintenance and properly maintained. Porambokes useful for agriculture should be reserved for that purpose.

(7) The Division Peishkars should be given power to sanction agricultural loans up to Rs. 3,000. Any works done by the ryot on his land calculated to raise the value of the land should be reckoned in favour of the ryot and increased loans to that extent given. Applications for loans should be disposed of within a minimum period to be fixed.

(8) A demonstration farm should be opened in each taluk.

(9) Agriculture should be taught as a compulsory subject in schools and a small farm should be attached to each school to instruct the boys in the methods of cultivation.

(10) An agricultural exhibition should be held here annually, as in Cochin and Pudukotta.

(11) Useful lectures on agriculture should be arranged to be given.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly